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21. PROMOTION. This paragraph provides for the promotion of personnel with staff status to grades up to and including GS-15. It does not apply to the promotion of employees to grades GS-16, 17, and 18; to the promotion of employees who occupy positions compensated in accordance with Wage Classification Schedules; or to specially qualified scientific personnel who are covered by STAT

a. POLICY

(1) Promotion is based on merit. Eligibility for promotion rests on the specific assessment that the employee is qualified to undertake higher level responsibilities. The primary assessment mechanism employed, though others may be utilized with the approval of the Director of Personnel, is that of comparative evaluation of the employees in a particular grade and/or function. The elements to be considered in making assessments concerning ability to perform at higher levels of responsibility are: qualifications for such responsibilities; performance in tasks providing insight relating to advancement potential; performance in tasks that may be already at a higher level of responsibility than present grade; display of personal qualities that would support at least proficient performance at higher level; and an overall evaluation of ability to perform at a higher level of responsibility either in the same function or a different function, which might include supervisory or staff responsibilities.

- (2) Each Career Service comprises a competitive area for promotion for members of that service. The Head of a Career Service may establish separate areas of competition within that service when necessary because of differences in occupation or functional lines of work.
- (3) Personnel serving on assignment outside their own component or the Agency must receive equal consideration for promotion along with personnel not so assigned.
- (4) Promotions are limited to one-grade advancements. Exceptions to this policy will be made only when the Director of Personnel determines, upon recommendation of the Head of the Career Service concerned, that exception is justified.
- (5) The comparative evaluation of personnel in grades GS-9 through GS-14 must be accomplished by the Heads of Career Services at least annually and shall be done through the mechanism of Career Boards and, where appropriate, Career Panels, unless some other mechanism, such as an Assessment Center, may be approved by the Director of Personnel.
- (6) Employees in grades GS-8 and below may be evaluated for the purpose of promotion at any time that Heads of Career Services consider it appropriate. As the assessment function is important for such personnel, use of comparative evaluation is recommended.
- (7) Those employees who give indication that they will be exceptional performers at higher levels of responsibility should not be constrained by time-in-grade guidelines if they are otherwise qualified for advancement.

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- (8) The bases for promotion of employees from the list of those eligible are: comparative ranking; the number of employees who may be promoted within grade ceiling constraints; and the specific comparison of qualified individuals against positions to be filled, where practicable. Time-in-grade is a guideline, not a rigid requirement.
- (9) Promotion recommendations will be submitted by the Heads of Career Services according to procedures and time schedules they establish in conformity to regulation. Promotion recommendations will not be made on Fitness Reports.
- (10) The regulations pertaining to assignment to a position of higher grade and to personal rank assignment are to be observed. STAT
- (11) The Director of Personnel will not process a recommendation for promotion of an employee in the absence of the last Fitness Report scheduled in accordance with or a STAT currently executed Fitness Report.
- (12) Career Services shall retain for at least five years records of the basis for their ranking of individuals within a group being evaluated in conformity with the provisions of subparagraph a(1).
- (13) Career Services are responsible for publishing in their Personnel Handbooks the details of the way in which evaluation procedures incorporate the elements specified in subparagraph a(1). The Director of Personnel will review such procedures to assure that they conform to Agency regulations and policies.

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b. RESPONSIBILITIES

(1) SUPERVISORS. Supervisors at all levels are responsible for providing Boards/Panels with performance appraisals in furtherance of the comparative ranking activity and, in the absence of provision for Board/Panel review of a particular grade class or function, are responsible for evaluating the merit for promotion of employees under their jurisdiction and for making the appropriate recommendations to the Head of the Career Service. Where employees are under the cognizance of a Career Board or Panel for ranking purposes, supervisors may, if authorized by the Career Service, make promotion recommendations through such Boards or Panels in accordance with the procedures of the Career Service.

(2) HEADS OF CAREER SERVICES. The Head of each Career Service is responsible for:

- (a) Developing and disseminating uniform promotion criteria in accordance with STAT
- (b) Providing the evaluation panels with uniform criteria for ranking in accordance with STAT
- (c) Reviewing the promotion process for the validation of criteria utilized in the selection of employees to be promoted;
- (d) Ensuring that the principle of comparative evaluation is followed in the Career Service;
- (e) Determining competitive areas in the Career Service;

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(f) Recommending promotions to the Director of Personnel
in accordance with the provisions of this paragraph.

(3) DIRECTOR OF PERSONNEL. The Director of Personnel is
responsible for:

- (a) Ensuring compliance with this paragraph by continuous
evaluation of the Agency's promotion program, and
- (b) Reviewing all promotion requests and approving promotion
actions that conform to the provisions of this paragraph.

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